(c) and (d) The estimated growth rate of SSIs to be set up in the State of Rajasthan by the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan is 7%.

Unidentified flying object in Himachal Pradesh

181. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scientist of ISRO come across an unidentified flying object (UFO) during a scientific expedition in Himachal Pradesh on September 27, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it was an espionage device;

(d) if so, the country or organization responsible for the same; and

(e) the steps taken to improve detecting machinery to be more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A team of scientists from ISRO and the Government college, Dharmashala were at the Samudra-Tapu glacial region, near Chandra Tal, Lahaul and Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh for an expedition to study the glacial retreat, when they sighted one unidentified object of 3-4 feet size, which had a set of balloons attached to it. The object moved downward and later upward to the ridge top and then into the atmosphere, after which visual sighting was lost. The object was visible for about 40 minutes. The sighting was reported to the local Police and the Military authorities.

(c) to (e) However, the object was photographed, being at a very high altitude, its exact nature could not be determined.

Joint Communication Satellite between ISRO and Boeing

182. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ISRO and Boeing Satellite Systems of USA are jointly building a Communication Satellite very soon;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary discussions have been held between ISRO and Boeing on this subject; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Space Research Organisation and Antrix Corporation, which is the marketing arm of Department of Space, are holding discussions with Boeing Satellite Systems with a view to exploring the possiblity of combining and offering satellite products to the global market.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO THE STARRED AND UNSTARRED QUESTIONS SET FOR THE 1ST DECEMBER 2004*

Measures to counter violence in North Eastern Region

*1. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in just over two years, 35 major incidents of violence were reported from the North Eastern Region; and

(b) the measures taken to counter the militant groups operating in North Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir. A number of major incidents of violence were reported.

(b) The Government has taken various steps to curb such militant activities, which *inter alia* include deployment of Army and Central Para-Military Forces, coordinated action by the security forces for counter insurgency operations, modernization/upgradation of the State Police Forces, reimbursement of security related expenditure and declaration of militant organizations as 'unlawful associations'. The Government has also extended an invitation to all militant outfits to give up the path of violence and to come forward for talks within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

*The sitting of Rajya Sabha on the 1st December, 2004 was adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of Shri V. V. Raghavan, a sitting member. Answers to questions put down with lists for that day were laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, the 2nd December, 2004.